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ABSTRACT

"Pacification" as a technique of social control has a negative effect because of its destructive or disintegrative impact on behaviors of individuals in social or problem-solving situations. "Pacification" uses communication techniques which discount some aspect of the problem-solving process: the problem itself, its significance, chances of reaching a solution, or abilities of the group to solve the problem. Pacification is based primarily on "grandiosity," the exaggeration of a problem to make it too big to be solved by the group. Techniques of pacification include use of abstract language, generalizations, stereotyped language, cliches, or proverbs. Situations are pacified when individuals use questions to make assertions, respond to a question or statement other than the one posed, or define the source of a problem to be outside the subject or situation. Through the use of pacification techniques, an individual can interfere with social interaction and interpersonal communication and thus block the functioning of problem-solving processes. (RN)

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PACIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

PACIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROCESS

Pacification is a widely used technique of social control. Social relationships are based on mutual problem-solving. When the problem-solving process is subverted or negated, pacification has occurred and social relationships are jeoprodized. The major question here is, how do people pacify social situations with communication techniques?

Pacification is accomplished by discounting some aspect of problem-solving. These aspects include the problem itself, the significance of the problem, the solvability of the problem, and the abilities of the persons involved to solve the problem.

The major premise that permits pacification is grandiosity. Grandiosity is the exaggeration or minimization of one thing to justify something else. Problems are either too big or insignificant to be solved.

Techniques that tend to pacify social situations include the use of abstract language, equivocal terminology, and the use of generalizations, stereotypes, maxims, cliches, proverbs. Pacification also is achieved by using questions to make assertions, by responding to a question or statement but not the one posed, and by defining the source of a problem to be outside the situation.

PACIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROCESS

Historically, pacification has been an important technique in social control. The significant feature of pacification, as control, is its effectiveness by virtue of its destructive or disintegrative impact rather than through the construction of usable information or the integration of reality-based data. Pacification means to debilitate, subdue, or destroy those social processes that facilitate interchange between individuals in a social situation or those processes that allow social problem-solving.

Pacification plays an increasingly obvious role in our everyday lives. This is not to imply that it is a new technique; rather, it has become blatant only recently. Actually, pacification, as social control, seems to have traversed man's history, becoming respectable with the theorizings of Plato, and operational through the works of Aristotle and Machiavelli. It remains to confront us in a constant barrage of illusions about Vietnamization, e.g., pacification of the Vietnamese and United States natives; the diminishing of the importance of social ills, e.g., jobs for Blacks, rights for women, inflation and unemployment; the explaining of budgetary "belt-tightening" of universities and colleges, e.g., the people, the state legislatures, the federal government as causes of the budgetary problems; the muting of intimate relationships, e.g., children feeling ostracized from their parents, or wives feeling useless and ignored by their husbands and children, or the development of neurotic behaviors because of severe potty-training or unresolved oedipal/electra attachments. In

whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we come face-to-face with pacification on an hourly basis. And yet, little is known about why it is done, how it is done, or what are its effects.

In nearly all our relationships, we are being neutralized, placated, discounted, negated, put off, dehumanized, mollified, or generally made unable to solve the multiple problems that we encounter in our daily reality. What is even more discouraging is that we, ourselves, are usually the chief architects of those strategies that pacify the social situations in which we find ourselves. This paper is an initial response to the question of how people pacify social situations with communication techniques. A theoretical description will be made of the use of pacification techniques in social situations and the major forms these techniques assume.

Individuals frequently find themselves in circumstances that involve other people--people who look similar, sound similar, behave similarly, but as perceived by the individual, are somehow different. These individuals, whoever they might view themselves to be, engage in some kind of cooperative behaving with others to achieve more efficiently the goals and objectives that they value. This does not mean that the participating individuals necessarily view their interacting as cooperative. They just as easily can view their relations with others as disjunctive and disassociative but conducted in concert with those others. Whatever the case in pursuing those goals and objectives, the major problematic questions being confronted are: (1) how does one pursue his[1] specific

ends while in congress with others who may be doing the same thing, and (2) how does one maximize the achievement of those ends without denying the potentials of others? Simplistically stated: how can I get mine safely without denying you yours? Because if I deny you yours, you will undoubtedly deny me mine and I think I really need mine--maybe to survive. The search for an answer to this question produces the fundamental process schema of the scarcity principle[2] for whatever social circumstance in which the individual is involved, whether it is a dyad, a family, a small group, a society, or a culture.

Conflict must emerge if the individual decides that he can't get his if others get theirs. For example, a husband says to his wife: "Honey, I need $2, to get my bowling ball fixed." She responds: "Well, you'll just have to wait. We don't have enough money now for that sort of thing." The husband reacts: "Well, by god, there better be enough money, or I'll damn soon find out what's happening around here." The wife counter-attacks: "Go strain your thumb." End of round one. Conflict under such conditions assumes that only a limited amount of opportunity, energy, or goal realization potential is available in any given social circumstance, and there is never enough for each person to realize his goals unobstructed.

Seduction[3] emerges if one decides that he can get his if others get a part of theirs, but he can only get his by

tricking them into giving him part of theirs. Again, the husband says: "Darling, my bowling ball is out of whack, and I was going to enter that tournament with the three $500 prizes. I know we could really use the money, and the boys think I'm a cinch to win, but I really need to get the ball fixed. It'll cost $25. Do you think we can squeeze it out this month?" The wife responds: "Well, that will really pinch us, but if you think you can win a $500 prize, I guess $25 will be worth it." The husband confirms the seduction with: "I'll bust my tail-end to win that for you, honey." End of deal. Seduction still assumes that there is never enough opportunity, energy, or goal realization potential to go around, and that personal goal fulfillment is realizable only by manipulating others into giving away part of theirs.

Cooperation,[4] based on introspection and self-realization, can be enjoyed if one decides that he can get his while others are getting theirs. For example, the husband says: "My bowling ball needs work, and it will cost $25 to put it back in shape. Can we spare it?" The wife responds: "Not really. We're really pinched this month." The husband responds: "Why not give me my birthday present early in the form of the $25 now?" The wife, "Well, I suppose we could do that. Well, okay, if that's what you want." End of discussion. First, cooperation assumes that there is enough opportunity, energy, and goal realization potential available in social circumstances to permit everyone to fulfill their needs and goals. Second,

it assumes that fulfillment is only potential until acted upon and that action produces fulfillment while simultaneously creating an environment[5] that permits personal growth[6] by everyone involved. Third, it assumes that fulfillment is an individual responsibility and cannot be projected onto other people. Cooperation is the only condition in which each individual's goals can be fulfilled because it is the only condition that directly addresses actual problem-solving. It also is the most tension producing condition of the three since it requires that each person be responsible[7] for his own behavior and needs, which demands the taking of personal risks. Of these three conditions, cooperation is the only one that produces a safe environment for personal growth and task achievement, each of which are necessary for healthy social interactions. The environment is safe for goal pursuit and personal growth because each person is responsible for himself; there are sufficient opportunities, energy, and goal realization potentials available for everyone; and the problem-solution process can operate without restriction.

Assuming that interpersonal interaction is purposive, specifically for the purpose of satisfying personal needs and goals, the manner in which those individuals involved in a social situation perceive it are of paramount importance to the understanding of the social process. This perception includes the intent of the others involved; the manner in which each conducts his affairs in relation to his own intentions;

the situation as he perceives it; and other people's intentions as he suspects them. Each individual's concern, then, should be addressed directly to the exploration of the dynamic between those perceptions and that conduct as it affects the social process that occurs. Specifically, how does the individual render the social environment safe enough for the pursuit of these needs and objectives? It appears that language allows the individual to pacify a social environment. This pacification, in turn, accentuates social entropy by discounting the processes that permit situated problem-solving. Thus, the social environment becomes non-secure and increasingly resistant to active[8] functioning. Simply, by the use of language and communication techniques, an individual can pacify a social situation so that it will rapidly deteriorate to a point where problem-solving and individual fulfillment are no longer possible.

The concepts of activeness or passiveness,[9] as situated modes of behaving, are fundamental to all social functioning. As a person engages in his daily activities with other people, decisions are repeatedly made regarding the achievement of goals and the solving of specific situational problems. This includes the relative safety and/or threat in each interpersonal situation. This determination influences whether the individual will operate openly or defensively while pursuing his own interests. Although goal attainment and need fulfillment take precedence in any particular situation, these

ends are pursuable only in terms of the perceived safety or threat in the situation. If the individual pursues his ends without tampering with the process operating in the social situation, he denies himself the assurance of whatever satisfactions he expects to realize. Be entering into the social process without attempting to alter it, the individual forfeits his control over the others involved, and allows himself only control over his own feelings and behaviors. As such, he makes himself completely responsible for them. For the active person, self-reliance provides all the security he needs for successfully functioning in the situation. For those who lack self-assurance or who doubt the viability of their own psycho-social potency, to allow the social process to operate unrestricted poses serious threat not only to the attainment of personal goals in the situation, but in many cases, to their very being. In the latter case, feelings of non-security usually are predicated on the individual's (1) lack of understanding of what is occurring in the situation; (2) judgement that he or she is not able to deal with the demands of the situation as it is perceived at that point; or (3) belief that the situation does not permit the fulfillment of his needs and goals. In some cases, such determinations are made while the individual is engaged in the social situation. This makes successful functioning a tactical problem and leaves the way open for adaptive strategies[10] that alter the situation. A passive individual seldom responds

to the tension found in social situations because he stimulates others to intercede between him and the potential problem--he builds a ring of people around him as protection. In doing so, he relinquishes control over the problematic sources of the tension and compounds the discomfort by bringing in more sources of threat. For this individual, social situations are habitually unsafe. In nearly all cases, the individual enters the situation with the cynical assumption that he lacks understanding, is unable to meet the demands of the situation, or will not be permitted fulfillment of his needs and goals. Whichever of these prevails, the best he can realistically expect is to not lose what he already has--but he cannot realistically expect to gain anything in the situation. The one exception is that the individual might gain the feeling of having successfully created the illusion, for others in the situation, that they are functionally potent, active, valuable, and perhaps attractive and lovable. Whatever the case, social interaction for those who are threatened by the processes involved, becomes an exercise in subversion, i.e., redirecting the process toward their own fulfillment without assuming responsibility for their part of the process; situational manipulation, i.e., creating illusions of force, concern, and situational potency; seduction, i.e., appealing to personal needs and wishes that are not a part of the situation but are still important to the individuals involved; and in extreme cases, guerrilla

warfare, i.e., controlling the social situation by covertly negating what is happening either through denial that it is happening or by not responding to it.

Pacification is accomplished by whatever behaviors individuals go through to avoid dealing with a problem (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). As stated earlier, the major problem in a social situation is to realize satisfactorily and realistically one's goals and fulfill one's needs as perceived. A social situation is successfully pacified when passive behaviors replace productive modes of behavior and problems are not being directly solved (Schiff and Schiff, 1971).

Problem-solving is fundamental to all social relations, whether they are focused on an agreed-upon problem on whose solution all parties are concentrating, or on the development of intimate contact and the problem is to be understood and appreciated by the other person. Problem-solving strategies come into existence only by virtue of the individual's capability to represent symbolically the relevant variables and to explore the potential interrelationships between these variables toward the production of a functional solution. In approaching problem-solving as the management of symbols, then, language and language behavior becomes a primary agent in facilitating such a process. Language is not only the medium by which the diverse and hitherto unrelated variables can be brought into effective relationship with each other. It also is the medium by which the interrelationships can be projected

to the form of a conclusion as well as the medium by which the solution can become implemented. By manipulating the language in a social situation, one can either efficiently facilitate the production of viable solutions, or defer, modify, or even defeat the production of solutions so that the problems remain unresolved. The production of "un-solutions" to problems is accomplished most efficiently by a process of "discounting" (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). In this context, discounting means that the full value of something is denied, either through modification or through negation. For example, Mary says to Joe, "I'm really concerned about the way the children are behaving lately." Joe's response, if he is focused on the problem being presented, might be, "What behavior of the children are you concerned about?" This lays a base for further exploration of both the behavior in question and Mary's feeling about that behavior, allowing movement toward a solution to the problem. If Joe wishes to pacify the situation, however, he can respond, "Oh Mary, there's nothing to worry about." Thus, he has discounted both Mary's feelings of concern and the possibility that the children's behavior is a problem as perceived by Mary. More important, he has denied the possible existance of a problem to be solved. He has eliminated his responsibility to consider a problem in this matter, and he has terminated any further interchange, unless Mary feels strongly enough about her concerns to press the issue. Even then, she is saddled

with proving that a problem exists and that her feelings of concern are legitimate. If she cannot, she can't expect Joe to take her seriously, i.e., case closed. The result is a "multi-problem" now--Joe's discount, Mary's concerns, the children's behaviors as perceived by Mary, the children, a terminated social situation, and Mary and Joe's individual feelings of frustration.

Discounting seems to occur in four ways. The first form is the discounting of the problem (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). For example, a woman is approached by a teacher regarding the conduct of her son on the playground. The teacher says, "Johnny seems to be unnecessarily rough with the other students. I wonder if it might not be brought about by some type of emotional difficulty he is struggling with right now?" The mother responds, "Well, little boys are always rough. That's just the way they are." By explaining away the teacher's concerns, the mother, in effect, discounts the existance of a problem and thereby terminates the exchange. A second type of discount is the discounting of the significance of a problem (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). The teacher goes on to say, "Johnny attacked another little boy during recess yesterday, and gave him a bloody nose." The mother's reply is, "Well, little boys always play rough and sometimes one of them gets a minor injury. Besides, if Johnny did that, the other little boy was surely asking for it." By characterizing the bloody nose as a "minor injury" and making it a natural consequence

of little boys playing rough, as well as in asserting that the other little boy was asking for it, the mother has denied the significance of a possible problem and again has terminated the interchange. A third type of discount is discounting the solvability of the problem (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). The teacher, as yet undeterred, presses forward: "I think that if you were able to work with Johnny at home and if I worked with him at school regarding his roughness, we might be able to get to the cause of this behavior together." The mother's reply is, "Well even if we find out what the cause of his roughness is, we'll just have to wait until he grows out of it." By proposing that time is the only critical factor in this situation, the mother has denied any possibility of being able to solve the problem. And again, she has terminated the interchange. The final form of the discount is the discounting of the person (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). The teacher states, "Maybe Johnny's roughness stems from some emotional struggles he's going through in your home. Perhaps you could observe him and get some idea of what things bother him?" The mother responds: "Well, even if there was a problem, what could I do? He's just like his father, and he's impossible for me to understand. Besides, I think you're getting a little hysterical about all this." By proposing that Johnny is just like his father and Johnny's father is impossible to cope with, the mother is discounting primarily herself as an effective problem-solving agent--"What can I

do?" She is also discounting Johnny because he's just like his father, who apparently was discounted sometime before. She has discounted the teacher as a "hysterical female," and she has discounted the situation by stopping it. This is a kind of wholesale discount.

An important feature of this set of interactions is that the mother only acts as a responder, which is a strong indication of her passivity. The teacher repeatedly initiates and is blocked in her attempts to explore the problem by the mother's passive denial. A passive individual seldom initiates interactions. Rather, he manipulates the situation to get the other person to initiate. This, in effect, relieves the passive person from his responsibility in the matter.

Discounts can occur in singles or in multiples, depending upon the agility of the discounter. For example, a learned professor, states to his chairman: "The quality of the students at this university has certainly degenerated. It used to be that the undergraduates were eager to learn, respectful, and were not always involved in this foolishness of protesting, taking dope, wanting to get involved in university governance, and the like. I think the administration has let the admission standards slide just so they can get more students enrolled and impress some politicians in the legislature. By god, if parents and administrators would do their jobs, we wouldn't have to spend so much time trying to educate belligerent kids and could have more time to do

some research and writing. As it is, I never have time to do the things I want. If it wasn't for all the irresponsibility around us, we could do our jobs and legislatures would leave us alone. Sometimes I consider quitting teaching altogether and letting them try to find someone to do as much as I do and still put up with all this crap." The translation of this statement might be, "I can't find problems that I can solve the way I used to, and it isn't my fault that I'm not publishing and working. The university doesn't know how hard I try nor how lucky they are to have me." Although this example is fictional, upon examination, one can find some example of each form of discounting that not only frees the speaker from responsibility for the affairs and his feelings about which he is commenting, but makes it impossible to comment substantively about the issue at hand, other than to agree or disagree. Even then, the professor has no responsibility in the matter.

In each of these examples, the major features of the discounting process is to deny or negate some integral facet of the problem-solution relationship, to disavow responsibility in the matter by shifting the responsibility to some other facet of the situation, and to make oneself ready to take control of the next emerging situation by repeating the process (Fried, 1970).

The major mechanism that permits social situations to be pacified is grandiosity. Grandiosity is essentially the

exaggeration or minimization of something in order to justify something else (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). For example, a Woman's Liberationist states: "Sexism is the single most pervasive sickness in this country today. Every man, every institution, every enterprise, no matter how large or small, is rampant with discrimination by sex." By using phrases such as "single most pervasive," "every," and "rampant," the liberationist has characterized the problem either as too large to be solved or at least too large for him or her to approach a solution unassisted. One result could be to wait until enough support is obtained. Enough support, however, is sufficiently ill-defined to preclude working toward the obtaining of that support, thus placing this approach out of the question. Another result could be to refuse to approach the solving of this problem by oneself since the problem is so pervasive, and again, out of the question. In either case, the problem is unsolvable and there's no further reason to consider possible solutions. However, this does not eliminate continual complaining by the liberationist which allows him or her to dominate every situation in which sexism could be viewed a problematic issue. The individual can consume a great deal of time and attention by lamenting how unsolvable the problem is, which terminates any further problem-solving interchanges and takes the liberationist off the responsibility hook. The basic purpose of characterizing a problem as "super" important or totally insignificant is to make it impossible

to deal with, while appearing as if one is dealing with the problem at hand--even against "impossible" odds.

The acceptance of grandiosity is a basic conditional premise that must be accepted to gain access to many social situations. For instance, in joining many social groups, a basic condition for inclusion is to agree that the group has an existence of its own, separate from the existence of any and all of its members, and that nothing should be done to offend or threaten "the group." This premise is grandiose if its interpretation permits the group to loom larger than all of the people in it. Thus, if behavior occurs that stimulates individuals to withdraw from each other while in the group, that behavior is usually isolated or pacified rather than being explored as a problem to be solved. More often, the group process is pacified from the very outset to preclude the emergence of a problem situation that would demand solving. It is only under unique circumstances that some type of disruptive behavior is allowed to emerge in the group that threatens it. As a rule, "the grandiosity always compensates feelings of inadequacy and prevents the establishment of tenable goals by providing a flexible reality in which . . . (individuals) can never effectively achieve or fail" (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). Thus, by defining a social situation in grandiose terms, all participants are freed from possible success and/or failure, and are released from being responsible for their own feelings and behaviors.

in the matter--they can be safe, secure, and sterile.

Social situations become pacified by the use of a variety of communication and semantic techniques. When these techniques are unleashed on the situation, they tend to short circuit the social processes by defeating the problem-solving potential, and at the same time, encourage continued interaction. The spurious effect of pacification is that it successfully defeats productivity while promoting further interaction which, in effect, hides the situational problem from all participants and observers. While the participants are working toward productivity, productivity is being denied by pacification. And although the participants have an immediate sense of movement or process toward goal achievement, they cannot realize their expectations in the situation. The process of moving "toward" defeats ever arriving at a result. By rendering the situation unsafe for open and direct problem-solving, the participants might be able to get their needs met, but each person is led to believe that he will get his met, even though it is not possible, because each individual wants his completely fulfilled.

Pacification is readily accomplished by using particular forms of language and techniques of interacting. The objective is to render "what's happening" obscure and to redirect attention to a pseudo-level of interaction that can be manipulated toward the fulfillment of individual goals. Pacification eliminates the risk of either having the goals denied

outright, or having responsibility for the goal achievement affixed to particular individuals. The risk-taking involved in pursuing one's own interests is translated into gambling for the fulfillment of needs--a matter substantially controlled by probability and "lady luck." By keeping the social situation obscure and indirect, the individual can "skulk" toward the fulfillment of his own goals while being freed of the responsibility of knowing his own feelings in the matter and having to deal with those feelings on his own. Responsibility for the feelings of each individual can be assigned to the group or the situation, or to the other person involved depending on which is most accessible. As an example, in playing out "emotional blackmail" (Bringle, 1973), the wife says to her Ph.D. husband: "You know that when you carry on those intellectual discussions with your friends, it makes me feel left out and miserable." The husband cannot respond to this comment because if he admits that he is aware of what happens, he is assuming responsibility for the other person's feelings. Blackmail here is demanding that the husband stop specific behavior because the wife has bad feelings about herself when the behavior is in effect. Thus whenever discussions become intellectual, the wife appears pained. To keep the wife from feeling badly, intellectual discussions are discontinued. The husband discounts himself, the other person, and the wife; and another multi-problem is off and running. The pacification of this situation occurs because the wife refuses

to control her feelings of being left out and miserable. And if control is to be present, the husband must do it.

Although there are a wide variety of forms and techniques used to pacify social situations, only the major techniques are being considered here. One of the more frequent techniques is the use of abstract or obscure language (Fried, 1970). The individual uses terms that have no directly discernible referent. For example, the scholar states: "The indistinctiveness of the theme for this conference tends to obviate each individual's ability to speak directly to the issue at hand." Translated, this means, "I don't know what I'm supposed to do here, and if what I've planned is not what you had in mind, don't blame me--or I'll feel/act miserably." The obscureness of the message and the abstractness of the terminology allows the scholar to divest himself of responsibility in the matter by blaming the conference managers. Yet he cannot be held accountable for what he's said or done or what he's neglected to consider or do because anyone listening to the statement must be unsure about what's been said. Thus the frightened and disgruntled scholar is home free again.

Another frequent technique is the use of equivocal terminology (Fried, 1970). Key words are often used in two different ways in the same statement, which renders the statement obscure, or at least non-distinctive and inaccessible for direct response. For example, the young activist states: "I'm only responsible for my own actions and feelings,

and not for the actions and feelings of others. If I don't accept responsibility for my actions and feelings, I am being immoral and unethical. Now I'm not responsible to a government that does not take my feelings and actions into consideration. And a government unwilling to respond to its people is irresponsible and therefore immoral and unethical." The equivocation in this statement occurs around the term responsibility. When applied to the individual it means exclusive responsibility for oneself; however when applied to the government it means inclusive responsibility for everyone. Another example is, "I can't stand intolerance in other people." Translated this means, "I can only be tolerant when I'm around tolerant people, and when I'm not, I can't stand them." The individual again forfeits self control to the situation and to the people in it, thus pacifying himself and those around him. They have to be responsible for his tolerance and/or lack of it. Whatever form of equivocation is used, it pacifies social situations because the issue supposedly being discussed is never the issue being discussed. The referent is constantly being shifted, and the statements being made again are inaccessible for direct response. The only possible counteraction that can be used is to trap the speaker with his own words.

A third category of pacification techniques is the use of generalizations, stereotypes, maxims, cliches, adages, and proverbs (Fried, 1970). Each renders apparent reality much

more flexible and uncertain than the other people in the situation realize. This allows the individual using this type of pacification technique to construct whatever essential reality he wishes without the constraints of shared meanings. Generalizations and stereotypes serve to make a problem so large that it is impossible to solve, i.e., usually much larger than it really is. Generalizations allow the user "to make a mountain out of a molehill." Operating from a highly select and limited data base, the user can construct a full-fledged statement that encompasses everything that might pertain to the issue at hand, but without revealing either the limited amount of data being used or the extreme ends to which the data has been generalized. The inaccessibility of the data and the extent of generalizing both have a pacifying effect on problem-solving because each denies clarity and specificity which are fundamental to problem-solving. Stereotypes impose an automatic category of solutions on a problem, thus stopping the problem-solving process. Stereotypes are particularly insidious because of the demand that every problem be forced into a pre-existing category which carries with it an automatically appropriate solution--whether it fits the problem situation or not. For example, "All those radicals who oppose the United State's involvement in the Viet Nam war are providing aid and comfort to the enemy, and have turned their backs on their national pride." The translation of such a statement is, "Anyone who opposes

the United State's involvement in the Viet Nam war is radical, unpatriotic, and treasonous." And the translation of this statement is: "Anyone who doesn't think the way I do, is against me." What possible response could be made to such a statement--perhaps an escape to Canada. The phrase "all those radicals," immediately makes responding to the statement unsafe since it includes both the generalization and the stereotyping techniques and makes the rest of the statement the embodiment of the indictment.

In much the same sense, maxims, cliches, adages, and proverbs render a social situation pacified because they are not situationally or reality based (Schiff and Schiff, 1971). Metaphorically, they identify a problem by comparing it with some standard category of problems. They automatically pose the solution to the problem to be the same as those problems found in the standard category--whether any of the solutions worked or not is beside the point. And they make the statement in cryptographic form that, like dreams, is nearly impossible to decipher without special knowledge. As an example, consider a discussion by a father of his son's latest social escapade. The father says: "Well, he's got to learn sometime, you get the check you earn, and by god, that's the way it is." Possible translation of this statement might be: "He's got to accept the consequences of his actions," or, "He did it, so don't ask me to help him out," or "Whatever the consequences, he must have done something to deserve

them," or "I'm no longer responsible for the manner in which he conducts himself and his affairs," as well as many other possible translations. The problematic character of this technique is that many translations are possible, and one is hard pressed to know which is intended. It sounds like a solution has been presented and makes the other person appear to be fully responsible in the matter. But the problem and/or solution to the problem are not identifiable, which makes it impossible to know what's going on in this situation or what the speaker is saying.

As another example, the mother, in response to the father's comment, says: "Yes, but blood is thicker than water." Obviously this comment is in response to the father's statement, yet one is hard pressed again to understand what it means. The possible translations are many and no appropriate response can be made to the statement. Although it is structurally a statement, the substance is hidden and demands specialized knowledge to be deciphered.

A fourth type of technique used in pacifying social situations is the use of a question to make a statement (Fried, 1970)--a kind of rhetorical question <u>ad absurdum</u>. For example, a husband states to his wife, "Why do you make me feel so useless all the time?" Although the question has been posed, "Why do you . .. . ," the actual message is the statement of "you make me feel so useless." The question is not supposed to be answered verbally, but is supposed to be responded to

behaviorally through the generation of feelings of guilt and subsequent apologetic behavior on the part of the wife. The husband now can give reign to his feelings of righteous indignation and freedom from responsibility in the matter. The product of such an interchange would be for the wife to be unable to respond to the question posed, thus terminating the problem-solving process.

A correlative pacifying technique is to respond, but not to the statement or question being posed. For example, a wife states: "You got home very late last night. Were you out drinking with that bowling bunch again?" The husband responds: "You never will forgive me for not wanting to play golf like your brother." The husband's response is to an issue that might be associated with what was being said by the wife, but in fact, he never responds directly to the statement or question being posed. This type of behaving becomes particularly non-productive when it is played out in response to a "question-statement maker," as discussed earlier. Such an interchange might be, a husband saying: "Why are you always griping at me all the time?" The wife responds: "You really have become impossible to live with lately. I've got my troubles, too, so don't dump everything on me." The husband retorts: "What have I done? You're the one who's always griping, so why should I put up with all this?" The wife stops the interchange process with: "Do you know how many men I could have

married, but I picked you, Lord knows why." The translation of this interchange is the same for both the husband and the wife, and goes something like: "I need to know what's bugging you about me, but don't blame me for what's going on. Feel fortunate that you're married to someone as tolerant as I am, because no one else would put up with you." The interpersonal problem-solving process has been completely dismembered here by ignoring and obscuring the problem. A solution is not possible because of the absence of a problem to be solved or at least one that can be identified. No one is responsible for any part of what's going on in the situation. No one responds directly to the other person. Time has been consumed, and nothing else is accomplished.

A final type of pacification technique is to identify the source(s) of the problem to be outside the situation (Fried, 1970), or at least, outside the control of those people participating in the situation. This makes the solution of the problem inaccessible to the problem-solving process in the situation. For example, a student states: "I think the requirements for this course are excessive." The professor responds: "Well, that may be true, but those are the requirements listed in the catalogue and accepted by the administration, so there's nothing I can do about them. Besides, every other quality school in the country has the same requirements and their students seem able enough to handle them." Instead of responding directly to the problem posed

in the student's statement, the professor directs the source of the problem away from the immediate situation, which includes both parties' choices and responsibilities in the matter. He drags in the catalogue, the university's administration, and the academic discipline as reasons for the requirements. In so doing, he attributes the course requirements to sources outside the immediate situation. He also has managed to end the interchange and has rid himself of responsibility in the matter. He even goes so far as to imply that the only one who has responsibility in the matter is the student, And if the student is unwilling to accept this, it is because he is incapable academically.

In each of these cases, the particular technique and form used discounts some or all aspects of the problem-solving process. This pacifies the social situation by terminating further interchange around the issue at hand.

A note of caution seems appropriate. One should not be mislead that such conduct is relegated exclusively to purely interpersonal situations. Evidence of these techniques can be found at every level of human interaction, whether it is between members of a family, a presidential address to a nation, a minister's statement to his congregation, or a learned philosopher's statement to mankind. The importance of identifying pacification is that it directly assaults all efforts to counteract social entropy, at whatever level it occurs. And by so doing, allows entropy to operate unchecked

and undetected, and must allow for the demise of social relationships and entire institutions.

In summary, man, through the use of symbols engages in social problem-solving. The efficiency of the problem-solving process, however, is contingent upon each individual's assessment of the relative safety of the social situations in which he operates. Through the use of pacification techniques the individual can render a social situation unsafe for interaction, and thereby amenable for the operation of manipulation and seduction. Further, by pacifying social situations, the individual can successfully block the functioning of the problem-solving process upon which all interpersonal relationships are founded. Pacification is important as a counteractive technique because it allows social entropy to operate unchecked. More significantly in blocking interpersonal problem-solving, the potential of the individual is seriously curtailed and his activeness, his problem-solving capabilities, his ability to give meaning to himself and his world are all defeated to render him passive, sterile, and vulnerable to all the social forces around him.

In closing, suffice it to say, that if this discussion is not understandable, don't blame me. This is a very difficult subject and I'm not certain what you, the readers, want anyway.

NOTES

1. The generic "he" will be used throughout this article to mean both men and women. The use of he is not to be construed as a sexist oversight.

2. For a more complete discussion of the "scarcity principle" see Philip Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness.

3. Seduction here refers to inducing others to do things by appealing to their more basic psychological needs. As in sexual seduction, social seduction usually is an attempt to appeal to emotional need satisfaction which is not generally admitted to be satisfiable in social situations.

4. Cooperation and collaboration are viewed here as equivalent forms of action. This comparability is based on the high similarity between how one behaves when cooperating and how one behaves when collaborating. Both require the ability to be able to view the problem in its totality, to consider one's own and the other person's interest in solving the problem, and a willingness to negotiate a mutually satisfactory solution for the problem.

5. The purpose of a social environment, a society, a group, a family, etc., is to provide reasonably safe conditions for the pursuit of individual goals and the sharing of perspectives. The actual safety of the environment is relative to what is happening, but the basic article of faith must be that the social situation is a safe environment if social process is to occur. See Lional Tiger, Men In Groups.

6. Personal growth allows for mutual independence based on satisfaction of individual needs that produce new energy resources that are recycled toward the satisfaction of new needs in new ways.

7. Responsible means being willing to respond to impulses, both internal and external, objectively rather than reacting against specialized impulses--usually from only one source, subjectively. Individual discipline is the willingness to resist the tension to react by being responsibly committed to objectivized data.

8. Active refers to independent action based on the needs and goals of the actor and appropriate to the constraints of the situation. It differs from rebelliousness, overreactiveness, etc.

9. Passivity is a technique to hide one's perspective from view except as it can be gleaned by someone else--extracted from one's behaviors. The passive person "fakes" it by appearing to be reality based while, in fact, being unwilling to "check reality out." A passive is usually over-stimulated by external events and secretive about internal states. He is subjective and resists being objective, except in a most superficial sense. He is impatient to get caught in his deceptions so that he can formulate new behaviors to become inaccessible once again. A passive won't share even when pleaded with--he hoards everything, including his bad feelings, pain, and plans.

10. Adaptive strategies refer to those tactics designed to get others to indicate what they want done in a specific situation and then to work out ways of accommodating those demands. Adaptation is modifying oneself to conform to other people's likes and dislikes, to the exclusion of one's own needs.

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